

IT COSTS MONEY TO CARRY SOME TOWNSHIPS IN ELECTIONS

While it is not generally known, it is nevertheless a fact that Secretary of War William H. Taft recently held a conference with Hon. Ichabod Swackhammer, professor of political and other economy, at the Chittenden hotel, Columbus, with reference to the secretary's candidacy for president.

The day that Mr. Taft left Porto Rico he sent wireless to the professor to meet him at midnight at the hotel named.

As the professor is a little bit cautious about going to Columbus, he asked me to accompany him, which I did. The object of the conference was to meet him at midnight at the hotel-campaign committee in Ohio, as we learned after our arrival. Had he known what he was wanted for he would have flatly refused to go.

There were present at the conference, which lasted for several hours, Prof. Swackhammer, Arthur I. Vorys, his state chairman, Henry A. Williams, the secretary of war and myself.

The professor went up in the air as soon as the treasurership of the campaign committee was offered him

by the presidential candidate. After awhile he came down and was able to talk connectedly and the following verbatim report of the conversation that ensued between the professor and the secretary of war was taken down and transcribed by the latter's private secretary:

"If I keep my health and senses, you'll not catch me in such a job as this Mr. Taft; no, sir, not by a long shot."

"I don't think that it would be possible for you to refuse me this favor," replied the secretary.

"Nothin' is impossible, General, when a feller lives in the blazin' light of aeternal experience."

"Then you've had some experience?"

"Some? I've had a 10-acre field full of it, and lots more was a growin' wild out in the woods pastur."

"Why, dodgast it," he continued, after a long pause, and a chew of dog-leg tobacco. "I've bin a-suspectin' myself ever since I acted as cashier in the committee room while the reg'lar cashier went out to a champagne lunch or sumpting or nuthin'."

er of that sort, and I was told to furnish the boys the snor of war."

"Were the boys after the snor?"

"Was they? They 'blinded me of a flock of turkey buzzards after a dead mutton. Do you want me to tell you just a little of my experience, Mr. 'Certainty, Professor.'"

"Well, then, here goes. You see the cashier has to distribute the campaign funds whar they will do the most good."

"The day that I was a-runnin' that end of the campaign, a tall, slim feller, with a weazened face and a pair of eyes that looked like two gimlet holes bored in a poplar plank, comes in and sot down over in the fur corner of the room."

"Fust he looked at me and then he looked at the jig-ame crank what they burn the gas in, and then he looked at me agin and said:

"O, it's a awful condition of things!"

"I'm as sorer as ennything kin be to hear it," sez I.

"You ort to be," he sed.

"May I be so bold, I inkwired, 'as to ax you what your name is, and whar you come from?"

"My name is Captain Bilkins, and I come from Black Snake township, Adams county. I'm a head Republican down in that thar neck of woods and they all do whatever I tell them."

"You're just the man I was a-lookin' fur, Captain—jest the very man. How do things look down in solid and glorious old Black Snake township?"

"They is a-lookin' most all-fired bad, of you will excuse the expression."

"Gemently! You don't tell me so."

"And they're gittin' wuss and wuss every day. We orto git 50 votes in that township, but ef sumpting or nuther ain't done we'll do blamed well of we git a-leven."

"How many Republicans is they down in Black Snake township?"

"Jest 50 of 'em."

"And they do whatever you tell 'em, do they?"

"That's what."

"Then why don't you tell 'em, dodgast you, to vote the Republican ticket?"

"It ain't no use to tell 'em that, the way things stand now."

"Why ain't it?"

"Bekase it ain't why?"

"Well, bekase I hain't got anny money fur a-tellin' of 'em."

"What difference does that make?"

"All the difference in the world. As long as I ain't got no money fur this here bizness, I might jest as well talk to a gate post."

"How much money will it take to git Black Snake township all right?"

"Only a hundred dollars."

"Only a hundred?"

"That's all."

"Why, that's \$2 a-piece fur each voter."

"Azackly, and there ain't no other man what could fix 'em fur \$4 a-piece."

"Then I jest thort to myself he's offerin' to this party cheap and I'll clinch the bargain, and onlooked the safe and counted out the hundred dollars."

"Arter I'd done it he sez: 'You understand how to run a campaign. I'll go down and git the boys together and when the returns come in you'll be surprised at 'em.'"

"Then he shook hands with me and went out lookin' as happy as a clam at high tide."

"Purty soon a cock-eyed feller, with a broken nose, with a bill on the end of it, comes in and salutes me:

"How air you, old boss?"

"Purty well, sez I, ho wa'r you?"

"Hearty as a buck, sez he. 'Pears to me you don't quite know me, he sez."

"I'm Jedge Pinkeye of Black Snake township, Adams county."

"Oh, yes, Jedge, I'm glad to see you."

"You ort to be, fur I am the high-cock-a-lorum among the Republicans down in Black Snake."

"There wuz another one of your leadin' men in here a minnit ago."

"What wuz his name?"

"Captain Bilkins."

"What! That old rooster! What was he after?"

"He wanted some money to fix things down there."

"You didn't give him any, did you?"

"That's just what I did."

"How much?"

"A hundred dollars."

"Jerusalem! Do you know what he is?"

"Fiddlesticks! He's a bleeder."

"A what?"

"A bleeder. A fellow who bleeds the committees and the candidates. He can't control even his own vote. We'll lose Black Snake township, when we ort to carry it by seven majority of the right man handles the stuff. We'll lose it by fifteen now."

"But can't this thing be fixed up in some way? Can't the township be saved?"

"Oh, it kin be saved if we go at it in the right way."

"All you've got to do is to point out the right way and it will be followed."

"Just lemme have \$25 and I kin fix it up between this and the day of the election. It's a porful lucky thing that I came up today, so that I kin shet that old bleeder outter the game. He might a spilled everything."

"Well, I opened the safe agin and counted out \$25 fur the Jedge, who

took it like a hungry hound takes a hoe-sake."

"I want to compliment you on your good judgment and excellent knowledge of human natur," said Jedge Pinkeye. "You never spent a \$25 to a better purpose in your life. You will be surprised when you see the returns from Black Snake township."

"You're bound to be," sed he.

"In about a leven minutes after the Jedge went out a great big feller, about seven feet around the waist-band, like you, General Taft, with a face the color of a paribled beef's liver and a nose like the forequarters of a lobster, comes inter the headquarters and yells out:

"Whoopie! I'm Kurnel Bigelow Blathers, the only original and genuine Republican leader in Black Snake township, Adams county."

"One of the others went out jest afore you came in," sed I.

"Which one?" sed he.

"Jedge Pinkeye."

"Well, I'll be goldarned. The Jedge was her, was he?"

"He was, fur a fack."

"Did he git you?"

"Git me fur what?"

"I gave him \$25 to fix things up down in Black Snake. I give Captain Bilkins \$100 by mistake, and then I give the Jedge \$25 to onto the mischief."

"Well, I'll be switched if that don't beat the moral bugs of the field. Why, Jedge Pinkeye is a hoodler."

"A what?"

"A hoodler."

"Is that wuss than a bleeder?"

"A blamed sigh wuss."

"Then I'm afraid things ain't fixed in Black Snake."

"No, sir, they're away off, and there is only one way to git them straightened out."

"How is that?"

"Gimme \$150 right quick and let me git back home before them other fellers plant the pizen in the ranks of the faithful."

"I seed it was perticklish case, so I opens the safe agin and counts out \$150 fur the kurnel."

"Kin fix it all up by practicin' economy and appealin' to patriotism," sed he.

"About how many votes can we count on from Black Snake?"

"We generally git fifty, but you may look fur a surprise from Black Snake this year," said the kurnel, as he squeezed out of the door.

"He hadn't more'n got down to the corner till a nice, dapper little feller, with a billed shirt and a standin' collar with a white choker and silk nallkes hat, lookin' as purty and innocent as Mr. Williams over there, came in and shook hands with me."

"I understand you are Squire Swackhammer, the renowned philosopher, logician, politician and statish, sed he, in a voice as smooth as silk."

"I am them things and severle more of the same sort," said I.

"I am very proud to meet you," sed he. "I come on a mission fraught with the highest interest of the Republican party. If we lose forty votes in my township we may sacrifice the state to the enemy. Air you ready to see it sacrificed?"

"There won't be no sacrificin' while I'm runnin' this here shop."

"Noble statesman! I would that there were thousands like you in high places. You can save forty votes in my township."

"I like your looks and you talk like a man of sense; but what is your name and where are you from?"

"My name is Samuel Slicker, a leading and highly respected business man at Slicker's Corners, Black Snake township, Adams county."

"Aha! You're from thar, too, air you? Black Snake seems to be in a heap of trouble, but I got it fixed jest a few minnits before you come in."

"You must be mistaken."

"About what?"

"About Black Snake township."

"About Black Snake township."

"Thar's trouble down thar, ain't they?"

"There is, I am sorry to say."

"Lots ov it to the square inch."

"That's true—alas, it is too true."

"And money will fix it all right?"

"That describes the situation."

"Then I've got it fixed. In the first place, I give Captain Bilkins \$100."

"Lord, help us!"

"To fix it up and then along comes Jedge Pinkeye and tells me that the captain is a bleeder and the money was lost, so I gives the Jedge \$25."

"Merciful heaven!"

"To onix the mistake, and then along comes Kurnel Bigelow Blathers, who tells me that the Jedge was a hoodler, and the money was wuss than wasted, so I jest gives the kurnel \$150."

"Horrible! Shocking! Incredible!"

"Who has agreed to undo both mistakes and fetch things out all right?"

"Why, Squire Swackhammer, my dear sir, do you know who this man Blathers is?"

"Nothin', exceptin' he is a kurnel and a large one at that."

"He's a grafter!"

"I didn't azactly ketch what you sed."

"He's a grafter!"

"Well, let him graft. I do, every spring, when I want to improve my orchard."

"But what I mean is that he is a

political grafter—one who preys on the committee."

"Well, I kin say it needs more or less prayin'—principally more."

"One who makes money off the credulity, the necessities, the avarice and the ambition of others. You have thrown the money away that you gave him."

"That wouldn't surprise me, Mr. Slicker."

"But you don't want to lose forty votes and possibly the state, and Black Snake township, do you?"

"Not if there is enny salvation salvation left in that thare safe."

"Thank heaven! I did not come too late. Furnish me \$200, so that I can catch the first train and save the country. Let me have it, and prepare for a great surprise when you hear the voice of Black Snake township."

"You bet I didn't keep that man awaitin'. The case was too desprate to admit ov enny delay. He took his two hundred and left on the run."

"You heard from Black Snake township after the election, did you Professor," inquired Mr. Taft.

"Azactly."

"Was you surprised," asked Mr. Vorys?

"They all told me the truth about that. I was surprised."

"Why?"

"There was jest 17 Republican votes in the box, when thare ort to have bin 50. They cost \$575 or \$33.88 a-piece."

"Did anny one ever tell you what Mr. Slicker was?" queried Mr. Williams.

"No, I found that out myself arter the election."

"What was it?"

"Jest his name only. He was slicker'n the other three put together."

"Now, then Mr. Taft," continued the professor, "you kin see fur yourself why I want take the job."

"But, professor, there is only one Black Snake township in Ohio, according to the geography, and you have found it out and can avoid it hereafter."

"Thare's jest one township that spells its name that way, but there is 711 more that has the same kind of a complaint as the one in Adams county. I'll have nothin' more to do with a campaign treasury. You've either got to put all the money in your own pocket or be fooled out of it by somebody else. I don't like to take to stealin', and I'm gittin' too old to enjoy bein' fooled by the other fellers."

"I'll tell you what I will do, how'm sorer, Mr. Taft. I'll hold Break-neck township fur you and it shan't cost you a cent. All I ask is to be made secretary of the treasury when you're elected."

"When I'm elected president," feelingly replied Mr. Taft, "you shall have the job."

And with that the conference broke up.

Chairman Brown evidently had long distance connection with the hotel room, and he told George B. Cox, and Cox told Dick, and they all got together and agreed that with Professor Swackhammer in the United States treasury for eight or even four years, Ohio patriots wouldn't stand in need of anything for a generation and that's why they got together so quietly that nobody except the Press-Post found it out until it was over.

—Press-Post.

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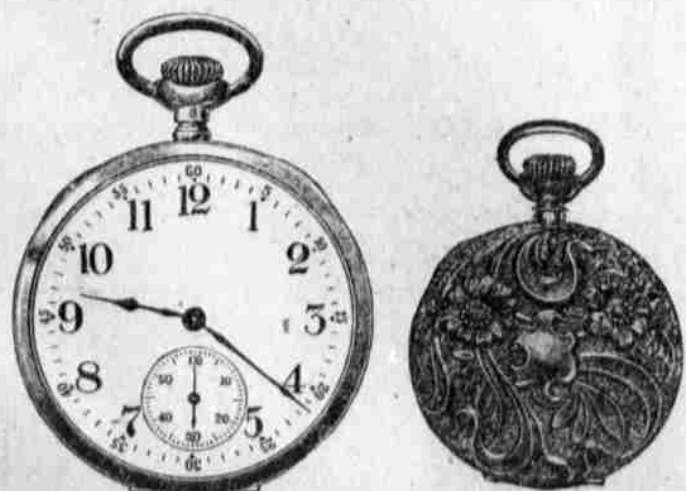
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